

Crystal at South Carolina Department of Social Services Health Occupations Preparation for Employment (Project HOPE)

Crystal Green moved from Washington, DC, to Beaufort County, South Carolina, along with her military husband and two-year-old son in 2009 and later gave birth to a baby girl. Throughout her marriage, she had to endure abuse on many occasions. Crystal felt that she was helpless and would not be able to make it on her own with two babies and no job, far from her family.

As time went by, Crystal decided that she could no longer subject her children or herself to this type of abuse, no matter how far she was from home or how helpless she felt. She decided that she was worth much more and took a stand to better her future for the sake of her children. One day, when her abusive husband went to work, Crystal moved all her belongings into storage, took her two children, and left the house which they had called home. Crystal moved back to Washington, DC, with her family until she got a call in 2010 stating that her husband had been seriously injured in Iraq. At that time she felt that it was her duty as his wife to return to Beaufort to care for her husband.

Once he got better, the abuse started again. Crystal left her husband's home once again with her two children, never to return. She shared that she had lost her mother at the age of 16 to murder, due to an abusive relationship, and later had to move to Charleston, South Carolina with an abusive grandmother from whom she ran away and moved to Washington, DC, to live with her aunt and father. Despite all of the challenges that Crystal has faced during her life, she continues to stay strong and remain positive.

Today Crystal is a single mother who has been living in Beaufort County for the last two years. Through her choir instructor, she heard about Project HOPE, supported by the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG), funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, and she decided to give it a try. She says, "I've learned that I need to be more confident in myself and always strive to reach my goals no matter what obstacles come my way."

During Project HOPE Boot Camp, Crystal faced many obstacles, but she did not allow them to cause her to miss any days during Boot Camp. The biggest obstacle was being served an eviction notice the last couple of weeks of Boot Camp, when she had just agreed to take custody of her three-year-old twin sisters. She now had to face possibly being evicted with four young children. After searching for assistance through many different local agencies and being denied, a door finally opened for Crystal and her family. Three days before she graduated from Boot Camp, she was scheduled to appear in court for the eviction hearing, but due to a favor, she was able to get the money that she needed to stay in her home and attend class that morning.

Crystal graduated from Project HOPE Boot Camp on February 22, 2013, with an average grade of 94. She began her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training at the Technical College of the Low Country in Beaufort three days later and currently cares for her two children, ages six and four, and her two twin sisters, age three. While Crystal has not yet completed any certifications, she has already proven to be successful by ending an abusive relationship and taking charge of her life. She is taking her education one step at a time and will decide what her next steps will be upon completion of her CNA certification.